

SKYE TERRIER

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2026

ORIGIN

Great Britain.

UTILISATION

Terrier.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

One of the oldest Scottish breeds; The Skye was once known as the Terrier of the Western Isles, evolving into what we now call the Skye Terrier, with a mix of breeds behind him, including Cairn Terrier prototypes. One of the most famed of the breed was Greyfriars Bobby who, in Edinburgh, around 1858 took up a vigil at his master's grave in Greyfriars Churchyard until he too died. Greyfriars Bobby was buried in un-consecrated ground in the churchyard, and his devotion is commemorated by a memorial plaque in the street and by a tablet on his grave. Although the majority of Skye Terriers are prick-eared, there is also a variety known as 'drop-eared', and then the ears hang flat against the skull.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Long; twice as long as high, with coat of good length, Moves with seemingly effortless gait. Strong in quarters, body and jaw.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

Body long, low, twice as long as high.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Elegant and dignified. A 'one-man' dog, distrustful of strangers, never vicious.

HEAD

Cranial Region:

Long and powerful, strength not sacrificed for extreme length.

Skull: Of moderate width at the back of skull, tapering gradually to strong muzzle.

Stop: Slight.

Facial Region:

Nose: Black.

Muzzle: Strong.

Jaws/Teeth: Jaws strong and level with perfect, regular scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

Eyes:

Brown, preferably dark brown, medium in size, close-set and full of expression.

Ears:

Prick or drop. When prick, gracefully feathered, not large, erect at outer edges and slanting towards each other at inner edge, from peak to skull. When drop, larger, hanging straight, lying flat and close at front.

NECK

Long and slightly crested.

BODY

Long and low. Sides appear flattish due to straight falling coat.

Back: Level.

Loin: Short.

Chest: Deep; ribcage oval, deep and long.

TAIL

When hanging, upper part pendulous and lower half thrown back in a curve. When raised, a prolongation of incline of back, not rising higher nor curling up. Gracefully feathered.

HINDQUARTERS

Forequarters:

Shoulder: Broad, close to body.

Forearm: Legs short and muscular.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Strong, full, well developed and well angulated. Legs short, muscular and straight when viewed from behind.

Stifle (Knee): Well angulated.

Hock joint: Well-angulated.

Metatarsus (Rear pastern): No dewclaws.

FEET

Forefeet larger than hind, pointing truly forward. Pads thick, nails strong.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Legs proceed straight forward when travelling. When approaching, forelegs form a continuation of straight line of front, feet being same distance apart as elbows. Principal propelling power is furnished by hind legs which travel straight forward. Forelegs moving well forward, without too much lift. Whole movement termed free, active and effortless and gives a more or less fluid picture.

COAT

Hair:

Double. Undercoat short, close, soft and woolly. Outer coat of reasonable length, hard, straight, flat and free from curl, never impeding action. Hair on head shorter, softer, veiling forehead and eyes, but not obscuring vision. Mingling with side locks, surrounding ears like a fringe and allowing their shape to appear.

Colour:

- Black, dark or light grey, fawn, cream, all with black points.
- Any self-colour allowing shading of same colour and lighter undercoat, so long as nose and ears are black.
- * A small white spot on chest permissible.

SIZE

Ideal height at withers:

Males: 25cm – 26cm (approx. 10" – 10½"); length from tip of nose to tip of tail 105cm (approx. 42")

Females: slightly smaller in same proportions.

N.B. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.



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FCI Standard No. 75: SKYE TERRIER:

FCI Classification: Group 3 – Terriers.

Section 2 – Small-sized Terriers.

Without working trial.